Suspension of Import of Titanium Dioxide

*312. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any representation has been received urging Government to suspend titanium dioxide import forthwith in order to save one public sector undertaking;

(b) whether it is true that due to reduction of import duty to 40 per cent on titanium dioxide in the last budget, the public sector undertaking is not in a position to liquidate its product even at a cost which was less than the production cost; and

(c) if so, action taken by Government to protect the interest of public sector undertaking of the country?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) There is no Central PSU which produces titanium dioxide. Two Units of State Government of Kerala are in the field of production of titanium dioxide used in paint industries.

The State Government of Kerala has made representation to Union Finance Minister on the matter against reduction of import duty on titanium dixoide. In the representation the Government of Kerala have mentioned that reduction of import duty on titanium dioxide has adversely affected the State PSU engaged in production of titanium dioxide.

Under the existing policy titanium dioxide is freely importable. However, this item has recently been placed in the list of sensitive items for the purpose of its import under Duty Exemption Scheme. Although, there has been reduction in basic custom duty on other chemicals from 40% to 30% in the Budget for 1997-98 but Government have not reduced basic custom duty on titanium dixoide. In addition to basic custom duty, titanium dioxide would also attract a speical custom duty of 2% as announced in 1997-98 Budget.

Karnataka's Claim for Royalty from BGML

*313. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of royalty Government of Karnataka claimed during the last three years, year-wise from Bharat Gold Mines Limited (BGML) operations at Kolar;

(b) the status of BIFR proceedings of BGML as on date and by when a decision to rehabilitate the BGML is likely to be taken;

(c) whether it is a fact that tenders were invited and quotations received from Australian firm to process tailings in the BGML; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) The amount of royalty claimed by the State Government of Karnataka during the last three years, year-wise from Bharat Gold Mines Limited (BGML) operations at Kolar is furnished below:—

Year	Amount of Royalty (Rs. in Lakhs)
1993-94	34.17
1994-95	55.41
1995-96	45.53

(b) The Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR), in the absence of a viable rehabilitation package being submitted to it, has issued a notice on 14.11.1996 for winding up BGML and the BIFR also issued a public notice on 15.11.1996 inviting suggestions/objections against winding up notice. The winding up notice has been issued by the BIFR before the Government could take a view on the rehabilitation package submitted by M/s Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India Ltd. (ICICI), the Operating Agency (OA) appointed by the BIFR for the purpose. BGML has

filed an appeal before the Appellate Authority for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (AAIFR) against the winding up notice issued by the BIFR and the AAIFR has stayed the winding up notice issued by the BIFR.

(c) and (d) The BGML floated global tender on 1st July, 1994 for the setting up of a project for recovery of gold through treatment of tailings. In response, quotations from five parties including Mining Project Investors Pvt. Ltd., Australia, and Cluff Resources Pacific Ltd., Australia, were received. However, on evaluation of the quotations and further consideration, BGML decided not to act upon these offers.

White Paper on Present Status of Public Enterprises

*314. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a demand from many quarters that Government should present a White Paper on the present status of public enterprises;

(b) whether Standing Committee of Public Enterprises has also asked for it and demanded removal of ambiguity on basic aspects of functional autonomy of public enterprises in the context of current liberalisation of economy; and

(c) whether Government will appoint professional experts as members of the Board of Directors of public sector enterprises to bring about efficiency in their functioning?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Appointment of professional experts as members of the Board of Directors of public sector enterprises is an accepted policy of the Government and has been in existence for the last several years.

NMDFC for Promoting Skill Development and Self Employment Among Minorities

*315. SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation was set up in 1994 for promoting skill development and self employment activities among minorities;

(b) if so, the details of the activities taken up so far by the Corporation and the number of beneficiaries, State-wise; and

(c) the schemes proposed to be taken up during the year 1997-98?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) Ministry of Welfare had set up an apex Financial Corporation, namely National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation on 30.9.94 for providing concessional finance to eligible minority beneficiaries for setting up self employment ventures and to assist in the upgradation of technical and entrepreneurial skills for proper and efficient management of production units.

(b) The National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation has been providing loans for self-employment activities to the members of minorities living below double the poverty line at concessional rates of interest. There are two loan Schemes; Term loan & Margin Money loan Scheme, operated through the State Channelising Agencies nominated by respective State/UT Govts. Under the Term loan Scheme, loan to the extent of 85% of project cost is provided at a rate of interest of 7% p.a. and Under Margin Money Scheme, loan to the extent of 25% of project cost is provided at the rate of 3% p.a. State-